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Guidance

School food standards: portion sizes and food groups for primary schools

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Applies to England

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These are the school food standards for primary school pupils aged 4 to 10.

Typical portion sizes given are in grams (g), millilitres (ml) and household measures for raw and cooked foods.

Starchy foods

This includes:

- all breads
- barley
- buckwheat
- bulgur wheat
- cassava
- cornmeal
- couscous
- maize
- millet
- noodles and pasta
- oats
- plantain
- potatoes
- rice
- rye
- semolina
- spelt
- sweet potato
- tapioca
- yam

Bread

This includes 50g to 70g of any of the following:

- white, wholemeal, granary, brown, wheatgerm, multigrain, potato bread: 1 to 2 slices of medium bread
- chapattis, plain baked naan, rotis: 1 small
- rolls: 1 small roll
- bagels: 1 small or half a large bagel
- pitta, wraps: 1 small pitta, 2 x 6 inch wraps: 1 x 10 inch wrap

Potatoes or sweet potato

This includes:

- boiled and mashed potatoes: 120g to 170g (raw)
- jacket and baked potatoes: 200g to 280g (raw)

Other starchy root vegetables

This includes 100g to 150g raw:

- yam
- plantain
- cocoyam
- cassava

Pasta and noodles

This includes 45g to 65g (based on average weight change of dried wholemeal and white spaghetti, pasta shapes and noodles):

- white and wholemeal spaghetti
- noodles and pasta shapes

Rice

This includes 35g to 55g (based on average weight change of dried rice):

- white rice
- brown rice

Other grains

This includes 40g to 60g of dried:

- couscous
- bulgur wheat
- maize (polenta)
- cornmeal

Starchy foods where fat or oil has been added before or during the cooking process

This includes 70g to 100g raw:

- roast or sautéed potatoes
- chips
- potato wedges
- pre-prepared potato products
- fried rice
- bread
- noodles
- hash browns
- garlic bread

- Yorkshire pudding
- chapattis and naan made with fat
- pancakes and waffles cooked in oil

Garlic bread

- as an accompaniment: 20g or one slice

Bread

Bread with no added fat or oil must be available every day.

All types of plain bread with no added fat or oil, including:

- brown
- wholemeal
- granary
- white
- mixtures of white and wholemeal
- pitta
- rolls
- chapattis
- naan
- ciabatta
- herb bread

Wholegrain

Starchy wholegrains including:

- wholemeal and granary flours
- wholemeal and granary breads and bread products
- whole-wheat pasta
- brown rice
- oats

Also look out for higher-fibre white bread, half and half wholegrain and white mixes such as 50/50 mix of brown and white rice, 50/50 whole wheat and white pasta.

Fruit and vegetables

This includes vegetables in all forms, including 40g to 60g raw:

- fresh
- frozen
- canned
- dried
- juiced
- pulses such as beans and lentils
- vegetables or mixed salad
- salad bars

Vegetables or salad should be offered as an accompaniment to every meal, in addition to any vegetables used as ingredients in composite dishes, such as casseroles and stews. Potatoes are classed as a starchy food and are not included in this food group.

Vegetables

This includes cooked, 40g to 60g or 1 to 2 tablespoons:

- peas

- green beans
- sweetcorn
- carrots
- mixed vegetables
- cauliflower
- broccoli
- swede
- turnip
- leek
- brussels sprouts
- cabbage
- spinach
- spring greens

Pulses

This includes dried, 15g to 20g, or cooked, 40g to 60g or 1 to 2 tablespoons (based on average weight change):

- lentils
- kidney beans
- chickpeas

Baked beans in tomato sauce

As an accompaniment, cooked, 50g to 70g or 1 to 2 tablespoons.

Vegetable-based soup

Cooked, 200g to 250g.

Fruits in all forms

This includes:

- fresh
- frozen
- canned
- dried
- juiced

Fruits can be provided within other dishes – for example, fruit-based desserts such as crumbles.

Large-size fruit

Raw, 75g to 100g or 1 small-sized fruit with skin. For example:

- apples
- pears
- bananas
- peaches

Medium-size fruit

Raw, 50g to 100g or 1 fruit with skin. For example:

- satsumas
- tangerines
- plums

- apricots
- kiwis

Small fruits

Raw, 40g to 60g or 10 to 15 fruits. For example:

- strawberries
- raspberries
- grapes

Dried fruit

Dried, 15g to 30g or half to 1 tablespoon. For example:

- raisins
- sultanas
- apricots

Fruit salad, fruit tinned in juice and stewed fruit

Raw or cooked, 65g to 100g (40g minimum fruit) or 2 to 3 tablespoons.

All fruit-based desserts should have a content of at least 50% fruit measured by weight of the raw ingredients (for example, fruit crumble, fruit pie, fruit sponge, fruit cobbler, fruit jelly). Fruit used as a decoration or jam added to a dessert does not count towards this standard.

Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

This includes:

- fresh and frozen meat
- poultry
- fresh, frozen and canned fish
- shellfish
- eggs

Meat alternatives

This includes:

- soya and mycoprotein-based meat substitute
- tofu

Pulses

This includes:

- beans (cannellini, kidney, pinto, borlotti, haricot, butter, but not green beans)
- chickpeas
- lentils (red, green, brown and puy)
- nuts

Roast red meat

Raw, 50g to 80g. This is also the portion size for fillings for baked potatoes and sandwiches.

This includes:

- beef

- lamb
- pork
- veal
- venison
- goat

Roast poultry

Raw, 60g to 85g. This includes dishes or products made from these meats. This is also the portion size for fillings for baked potatoes and sandwiches.

This includes:

- chicken
- turkey
- duck

Red meat or poultry

Raw, 50g to 75g. In dishes such as:

- casserole
- stew
- pie
- curry

Weight may be reduced proportionately in composite dishes if adding another protein based food, such as:

- beans
- cheese
- milk

Meat-based soup

Cooked, 200g to 250g.

White fish

Raw, 60g to 90g. Whether cooked alone, or in a dish such as a casserole or fish pie, or as a breaded or battered product.

This includes:

- pollock
- hake
- coley
- cod
- haddock
- plaice

Oily fish

Raw, 55g to 80g. This includes:

- fresh, tinned or frozen salmon
- sardines
- pilchards
- mackerel
- herring
- fresh or frozen tuna

Tuna only counts as an oily fish when it is fresh or frozen because the omega-3 fatty acids are removed during the canning process.

Fish or shellfish

Cooked, 50g to 70g, served in a salad, baked potato or sandwich. This includes:

- tuna
- salmon
- mackerel
- prawns

Breaded or battered fish portions and products

Cooked, 55g to 80g. This includes:

- fish cakes
- fish fingers
- fish goujons

Egg

Cooked, 1 egg, served in a:

- salad
- baked potato
- sandwich

Meat alternatives

Cooked, 50g to 70g. Made from:

- soya beans (such as soya mince and tofu)

- mycoprotein-based meat substitute (in dishes such as vegetarian casserole, stew, pie, or curry)

Weight may be reduced proportionately in composite dishes if adding another protein-based food such as beans, cheese, or milk.

Pulses

Raw, 20g to 25g. Cooked, 50g to 60g or 1 to 2 heaped tablespoons. This includes:

- beans (cannellini, kidney, pinto, borlotti, haricot, butter, but not green beans)
- chickpeas
- lentils (red, green, brown and puy)

Vegetarian

Raw or cooked, 50g to 70g. This includes vegetarian:

- sausages
- burgers
- nut cutlets

Meat products

Sausages

Raw, 50g to 75g or 1 sausage, made from:

- beef
- lamb

- pork

Burgers

Raw, 55g to 80g.

Other items

Cooked, 80g. For example:

- scotch pies
- bridies
- sausage rolls
- cornish pasties
- encased meat pastry pies
- cold pork pie

Breaded or battered shaped chicken and turkey products

Cooked, 50g to 70g. For example:

- nuggets
- goujons
- burgers

Milk and dairy

This includes all types of:

- milk
- cheese
- yoghurt (including plain or fruit, frozen and drinking yoghurt) or fromage frais
- milk-based sauces
- custard (made with milk)
- puddings made from milk
- milk-based sauces

Lower-fat drinking milk

150ml to 200ml.

Milk puddings and whips made with milk

100g to 120g.

Custard made with milk

For example, served with fruit.

Portion size excludes fruit: 80g to 100g.

Yoghurts

80g to 120g

Cheese

20g to 30g. Added to:

- salads
- baked potatoes
- sandwiches
- crackers

Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

Deep fried foods, including those deep fried or flash fried in the kitchen or in the manufacturing process, such as:

- chips (including oven chips)
- potato waffles
- hash browns
- samosas
- plantain chips
- spring rolls
- doughnuts
- pakora
- bhajis

Refer to relevant portion size.

Batter-coated and breadcrumb-coated foods

This includes any bought-in or homemade products, such as:

- chicken nuggets
- fish fingers
- battered onion rings

- tempura

Refer to relevant portion size.

Pastry

This includes:

- shortcrust
- flaky
- filo
- choux
- puff

Used in:

- quiches
- meat pies
- fruit pies
- fruit tarts
- sausage rolls
- pasties
- samosa

Refer to relevant portion size.

Desserts

This includes cereal and starch based desserts, such as:

- rice
- semolina
- tapioca pudding

Fruit-based desserts

This includes:

- jelly
- fruit compote
- crumbles
- sponge puddings

Vegetable-based desserts

This includes soya-based mousse.

Egg-based desserts

This includes ready-to-eat products and products prepared from egg, such as:

- flans
- egg custard
- custard fillings in pies
- meringues

Dairy-based desserts

This includes:

- puddings with dairy-based fillings
- fruit or flavoured yoghurt or other fermented milk and milk products
- ice cream

- mousse

Fat-based desserts

This includes ice cream, made with vegetable fats.

Fruit pies, sponge puddings or crumbles

80g to 100g.

Fruit jelly

Portion size excludes fruit: 80g to 100g.

Cakes and biscuits

This includes:

- manufactured, bought-in products
- prepared-from-scratch cakes
- biscuits such as individual cakes, buns and pastries, scones, sweet and savoury biscuits

Cakes, tray bakes, muffins, scones, doughnuts

40g to 50g.

Biscuits and flapjacks

25g to 30g.

Ice cream

60g to 80g.

Pizza base

50g to 70g.

Savoury crackers, bread sticks

Served with fruit, vegetables or dairy foods.

Portion size excludes fruit: 10g to 15g or 1 to 2 crackers.

Condiments

No more than 10g or one teaspoonful. This includes:

- ketchup
- mayonnaise
- salad cream
- brown sauce
- chutney

Gravy

20g to 30g or 1 tablespoon.

Snacks

Snacks means pre-packaged items other than confectionery, sandwiches, cakes or biscuits that are ready to eat without further preparation and consist of, or include, as a basic ingredient potato, cereals, soya, nuts, seeds, fruit or vegetables.

Refer to relevant portion size for fruit, vegetables and crackers.

Confectionery

Confectionery is not permitted. No portion sizes provided.

This includes:

- cereal bars
- processed fruit bars
- non-chocolate confectionery (whether or not containing sugar)
- chocolate in any form (except hot chocolate)
- any product containing or wholly or partially coated with chocolate
- any chocolate-flavoured substance

Cocoa is permitted.

Healthy drinks

Fruit or vegetable juice

Maximum portion size: 150ml.

Drinking milk

150ml to 200ml.

Combination drinks

For example:

- fruit juice with water
- flavoured milk

Maximum portion size: 330ml.

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